

# A GOOD ROADS PLEA

The Duty of the Press in This Important Movement.

## GREAT QUESTION OF THE HOUR

An Able Paper By C. H. Varner, Esq., Editor of the Lexington Dispatch. Read Before the North Carolina Press Association at Their Recent Convention Held at Hendersonville.

Building good roads is the great question of the hour in North Carolina. In the familiar phrase, it is the paramount issue, not only in this State, but throughout the Union. It transcends in importance politics, the tariff, the money question or any other question. Nothing is hampering this country so much as mud; nothing could possibly do more for the development of the State and nation than macadamized highways. Hence, the duty of the press in this State, especially, to begin a State-wide campaign for the promotion of better roads. It is our manifest duty to cry aloud to advocate strongly, to publish information, to mold public opinion until the people reach that point where they are willing to bear the cost of building modern roads in every county.

It is idle for me to attempt enumeration of the benefits good roads confer on a people. Every man, no matter how unlettered, instinctively knows that a good road is a far better thing to have than a bad road. We naturally have it in us to know the value of, and to construct an easy pathway, but, unfortunately, the devil of tax steps in and tempts us to bear the ills we have, rather than fly to blessings we know of and greatly desire. Our people all believe in good roads, but there are some who are unwilling to pay the cost. I have heard good men and good farmers declare that inasmuch as the mud trails we now have were used by their fathers, they are good enough for us and it were useless to suggest a change in them. Others declare that we are too poor to attempt road construction, and still others are vehement in their opposition to the idea of handing down to succeeding generations such a loathsome thing as a public debt. These are some of the objections one hears.

**Factor in Civilization.**  
I believe in my soul that a bad road is the greatest curse that can be laid on a community. It stunts the industrial, moral and intellectual life of a people. But a good road is equally as great a blessing, for once a community gets facilities for transportation and communication, all other blessings will be added thereto. Mr. Roosevelt has well said that the difference between semi-barbarism and civilization is the difference between good and poor means of communication. Far back in history good road building was recognized as a leading factor in advancing civilization. We are told that early explorers in Peru found improved highways, one of the military roads being 2,000 miles in length, with tunnels through mountains, bridges or ferries over streams, a road 20 feet wide, made of flagstones covered with bitumen. Ancient Mexico built good roads, as did India and Persia. In the latter country the monarch built a smooth, hard highway alongside of the common earth road, and none could travel it save his royal highness. The Roman roads are still the marvel of a modern world and are still used. Nothing contributed more to Rome's prosperity and prowess than these imperial highways, straight as an eagle's flight, reaching to all parts of the world-empire.

Good roads mean progress and prosperity and are a benefit to the people who live in cities, and an advantage to people who live in the country. Like good streets, they make habitation along them desirable. You never, or rarely ever and then not for long, see a shabby home by the side of a modern road, where everybody passes and sees how you live. They make people straighten up and put their best foot forward. The value of farms is enhanced. Statistics prove that in nearly every case the States having the highest percentage of improved roads are a powerful factor in encouraging the settlement of unused lands. Roads also have a far-reaching influence in holding men to their farms, and restraining them from drifting to the towns. While the manufacturing towns must have labor, who is here that will deny that if our counties had good roads, the hundreds of good farmers would not have moved their families from the country home to town to work in the mills? So great an exodus occurred two or three years ago that farm labor was almost impossible to secure. These people are needed in the country; there they would have stayed had there been good roads, which make farm life so much more attractive. As the price of lands depends as much on accessibility to market as on productivity, it follows that road improvement, by holding people and attracting others, directly tends toward increase in values of all farm lands within touch of the improved highways. It is shown that in States

where the average price of land is less than \$20 an acre the percentage of improved roads is only 1.8, whereas, in States where the acreage value is more than \$20, the average of improved roads is 9 per cent of the total mileage.

There are records which show that roads have increased the value of farm lands from 50 to 500 per cent. It has been ascertained by a dozen railroads through their land and industrial departments that farms through which good roads run are enhanced in value from \$2 to \$9 an acre, and whether conservative or enthusiastic, all concede that the increase is marked, immediate and inevitable. Suppose a county of 200,000 acres voted bonds, and placing the enhanced value at only \$4.50 an acre, it will be seen that the land owners thus benefitted would gain not less than \$900,000. If the bond issue amounted to half a million, there would be \$400,000 profit at once. The increase in the profit and price of farm products is equally certain and plain. The farmer's produce is worth nothing unless it can be placed on the market. Time was in England when food would be rotting in one place while people suffered for the lack of it in a community a few miles away, because it was impossible to transport the products of the farms.

**Price of Farm Products.**  
Official records in Guilford county show that the price of farm products since good roads have been built has increased from four hundred to seven hundred per cent. And yet, there is a farmer in my county who maintains that good roads will ruin him and the county, because they will reduce the price of produce, since, when the roads are bad, he gets \$2.50 a cord for wood, because wood is made scarce by the impassability of the highways; and he says he would rather haul wood through mud hub deep for \$2.50 than to roll along a smooth road and sell it for \$1, which price he claims a cord will drop to in the event of good roads. The experience of Charlotte and Greensboro entirely disprove this absurd idea, for there are not two better markets in the State, and the first named has 200 miles of good roads leading to it, and the second 100 miles.

**Tax or Bonds?**  
The question comes, how to get good roads? Shall we vote a direct tax or shall we issue bonds? Shall we pay as we go, or shall we pay part now and let future generations pay part? To my mind, the whole question comes down to whether we want good roads now, or whether we are willing to build a few miles now and let another generation build a few miles and another another, until in the course of human events we secure good roads throughout the State years after every person now at the age of accountability is dead and gone, I stand for bonds. Mecklenburg has been building roads 30 years, and she has about 200 miles, using direct tax. Guilford has been building roads six years and she has 100 miles, using bonds. We are too far behind to depend on a direct tax. We must go ahead and issue bonds, build the roads, increase our wealth, and reap manyfold the cost of the roads. Is North Carolina to labor another generation before good roads come to pass? God forbid. We would lose enough to macadamize every mile of road in the State.

Should a county issue bonds before a dollar is expended, a competent civil engineer should be secured and put to work mapping out the county. He should be under either the county commissioner or a highway commission composed of the commissioners and other men selected by the people. It is absolutely necessary that an engineer be employed, even though he cost considerable salary, for the location, construction and maintenance of roads are operations that no man or set of men without the aid of an engineer can conduct in the proper way to get the best results at the least cost. There is a disposition on the part of many people to cavil at the price paid such an engineer, and if you undertake to fight for roads you will meet it at the outset. That idea must be eradicated, as must also the idea that the men entrusted with the public funds will not place every dollar where it belongs. In an age of skepticism in business, it is not unnatural that people should suspect that huge sums voted for roads will be preyed upon. No county can build roads without an engineer who acts as pathfinder, going over the county, studying the situation, making maps, and doing all that very necessary preliminary work without which oftentimes money is worse than wasted.

**Road-Building an Art.**  
When county officers learn to appreciate the fact that road-building is an art, they will rely more and more upon expert advice and scientific demonstration, and when they have learned what class of roads is desirable, they will construct them and then guard them.

Therein lies one of the most important of all American highway questions. Americans build as good roads as Englishmen or Frenchmen, but having done so, they rest contented with their efforts and let each passing breath of air, speeding automobile, or drenching rain blow or wash the road surface away.

In the countries of Europe, where the well-nigh perfect roads are the pride of the citizens and the envy and admiration of visiting Americans, most jealous care is constantly given;

a careful day-by-day inspection is made, and every depression is quickly filled and all inequalities rolled or tamped.

Two requisites, therefore, confront the county supervisors at the outset—first to ascertain what roads would be most suitable to that particular section, and secure what sums should be expended for their maintenance after completion.

These are vastly important and the nation's very small percentage of improved roads is due largely to a failure to give consideration to them. Millions of money have been wasted in building roads which local conditions made impracticable and out of all cost proportion to the county's revenues.

There are exceptions to all rules, however, and Pike county, Alabama, stands as a glittering exception to the usual construction blunder. There the county officials had planned to expend a large sum in the building of gravel roads.

Mr. W. L. Spoon, United States superintendent of road construction, being sent to make an inspection of the county's road possibilities, learned that 700 miles of important routes needed improvement. He figured that the cost of gravel roads would be \$3,000 a mile—plainly a sum greater than the county could be bonded for. Conditions, however, were ideal for sand-clay construction and he strongly urged its adoption. By legal proviso the county could be bonded for only 3 1-2 per centum of the assessed value of the real and personal property. The plan was decided upon and an issue of \$143,000 was voted. One hundred thousand dollars' worth of the bonds were quickly sold, being disposed of in \$50,000 allotments.

The first allotment brought a premium of \$625 and the second one of \$325. Forty thousand dollars was at once spent for mules and road-building machinery and work was started. With the sum remaining, 118 miles of the finest sand-clay roads in the South had been built within two years from the date of the bond issue; a generous sum was still on hand; eight gangs were at work, and the people were so pleased they stood ready to take up the remaining issue of \$43,000 and expend it in the same way.

Inasmuch as road building and road mending have been for a century under county commissioners and township road supervisors with practically no beneficial results observable—it seems plain that the time for a radical change of methods is at hand.

I am an earnest believer in Federal and State aid and co-operation in building good roads, and I believe that the time is at hand when the government will hit upon some plan whereby it may co-operate with the State and the State with the county, in the work. It has been argued that it is unconstitutional. Why should it be more so than expenditure of money for river and harbor improvements, which often take the form of a private enterprise? As a matter of fact, it has been shown conclusively in Congress that so far from being unconstitutional, the government in its very beginning began the construction of good roads and expended more than seven millions on the old Cumberland road from Maryland to St. Louis, a distance of 700 miles, and the work was only abandoned because there arose a question of authority and responsibility as to who should maintain and repair the road, the State, or the Federal government. What does the government do for the farmer? We spend millions annually on the army, a dead loss, though doubtless necessary; we spend some hundred millions on the navy; have spent a half billion on river and harbor improvements. During ten years we spent more than six billion dollars of which about forty-seven million went to the agricultural department; but not a dollar for the promotion of good roads, a common blessing for all the people. During fifty years, in all the vast sum our government has disbursed for one thing and another, not a dollar has been appropriated for roads. And yet, the farmers of the country compose the bulk of population, and last year contributed to the national wealth some eight billions of dollars. The one-horse farmer around behind the hill miles from town forms the foundation of the nation, and what has the government done for him? Nothing. The burden is upon him, he foots the bills; and the government takes his money and spends it on everything under the sun by the millions, on everything but on what affects him mostly—roads. In 1908 the farmers of this country not only fed more than eighty millions of people, but sent across the sea a billion five hundred millions of farm products. This preserved the balance of trade with all the world, and gave five hundred millions to the country to set aside for the proverbial rainy day. Had this not been, a billion dollars would have had to have been sent abroad to pay import duties. It was enough to pay the immense appropriations of Congress and still add half a billion to the national wealth. In the face of all this, the Federal government has done not a thing for good roads.

The forerunners of a national highway from New York south to Atlanta have recently passed through the State. I believe the time is at hand when the government will spend money on that road. I believe we shall see a road from Asheville and the west through to the coast. It is bound to come. The duty of the press lies in hastening the day.

## TENNESSEE BECOMES DRY

The Midnight Hour Wednesday Marked the Passing of Saloons in Tennessee.

Memphis, Tenn., Special.—Bells in church and town clock steeples on tolling the midnight hour Wednesday night marked the passing of saloons in Tennessee, for at that hour the Holladay State-wide prohibition law went into effect. This law makes it illegal to sell all alcoholic beverages within four miles of any school house in the State. Only two oases are left in all Tennessee. Both are within 12 miles of Memphis, near the Mississippi State line. The nearest school house is six miles from both of these points, but steps have already been taken by white ribbons to have the county board of education erect a school house within the distance prescribed by the Holladay bill, so that there will be no mecca in the entire State for thirsty pilgrims. Thousands of men are thrown out of employment and barkeepers are seeking better irrigated fields. The passing of the saloon in Memphis, and in other cities throughout the State, according to advices received Wednesday night, is marked by scenes of unusual hilarity.

### Would Debar Standard Oil.

Jackson, Miss., Special.—Application was made Wednesday in the Chancery Court of Clay county by District Attorney A. L. Lamb for a perpetual injunction, restraining the Standard Oil Company from operating in the State of Mississippi and seeking to collect penalties aggregating \$11,000,000 for alleged violation of the anti-trust law of the Commonwealth. The injunction bill recites in detail the history of the Standard Oil Company and the methods by which it is alleged to have stifled competition in this State. Under the Mississippi code, as amended by the Legislature in 1906, the State is entitled to recover a statutory penalty of \$5,000 a day for each specific violation of the anti-trust laws and the penalties sought to be recovered in this case cover three years. The hearing, it is understood, will take place at West Point during the November term of the Chancery Court.

### Blow to Prohibition.

Montgomery, Ala., Special.—In a decision of the Alabama Supreme Court Wednesday the "locker system" was upheld. The court holds that liquor when kept in lockers by individuals and is not kept for sale is personal property; that the keeping in the possession by a person, whether for himself or for another, unless he does so for the illegal sale of it, or for some other improper purpose, can by no possibility injure or affect the health, morals or safety of the public.

### Seven Thousand Go Out on Strike.

Pittsburg, Pa., Special.—Fifteen plants with a total capacity of 190 mills, were crippled or entirely tied up, at midnight Wednesday by the strike order that went into effect in the union sheet and tin plate mills of the United States Steel Corporation, according to claims and by the officials of the Amalgamated Association of Iron Steel and Tin Workers. The total number of men on strike is estimated at 7,000. The strike is the outcome of the open shop order posted four weeks ago.

### Young Lady Killed.

San Francisco, Special.—Miss Caroline Brash, cashier for a contracting company, was shot and killed Wednesday in the Wells-Fargo building, presumably by one of the concern's employees. The police say the man shot the girl during a dispute over the deduction of \$5.75 from his time check. J. Novak, a quarry laborer, is sought by the police as the slayer.

### Calhoun's Motion Overruled.

San Francisco, Special.—A motion to set aside the second indictment against Patrick Calhoun, president of the United Railroads, whose trial on a charge of offering a bribe to a supervisor resulted in a disagreement, was Wednesday overruled by Judge Lawlor. Attorneys for Calhoun then made a motion for a change of venue. The hearing on this motion was set for July 8.

### Fought a Street Duel.

Middleboro, Ky., Special.—J. W. Mayes, a locomotive engineer, and Robert Culbertson, both of Norton, Va., fought a duel in the streets of Middleboro last Tuesday night. Anna Hayes, over whose affections the men were jealous, was shot twice during the fight and is dying. Mayes was shot twice and cannot live. Culbertson escaped with a serious wound in the arm. Mayes, mortally wounded, fled after the shooting, and when the police and a posse overtook him, he said to have attempted suicide by jabbing his throat with a pocket knife.

### Chung Sin is Identified.

New York, Special.—The complacency of Chung Sin, went all to pieces Wednesday afternoon when Arthur Logan, an expressman, walked into the cell and brusquely shouted: "Hello," "You are the man, who told me to take the trunk down stairs carefully. There was another slim fellow with you in the room—the same that came over to the office to give me the order to call for the trunk."

## PALMETTO HAPPENINGS

News Notes From All Parts of the State of Interest to South Carolinians in General

### For Woman's Monument.

The Columbia State of Thursday gives the following list of contributions to Woman's Monument by counties:

Richland	\$963.50
Marlboro	533.98
Anderson	487.65
Sumter	463.59
Marion	460.25
Aiken	405.05
Spartanburg	376.20
York	338.10
Darlington	337.25
Lancaster	306.60
Greenwood	284.74
Newberry	260.45
Greenville	236.20
Chester	213.16
Lexington	207.73
Chesterfield	200.01
Fairfield	198.00
Abbeville	197.7
Laurens	186.00
Kershaw	178.50
Orangeburg	177.25
Lee	174.50
Rainwell	163.25
Edgefield	142.50
Florence	105.00
Cherokee	100.00
Calhoun	95.02
Oconee	85.50
Dorchester	85.45
Bamberg	81.25
Saluda	63.80
Pickens	54.05
Horry	50.00
Clarendon	45.25
Union	44.00
Hampton	28.00
Georgetown	25.00
Colleton	18.75
Charleston	16.00
Williamsburg	15.50
Berkeley	13.50

### Snake in Role of Goat Feasts on Fine Laces.

Greenwood, Special.—Here is a snake story to match that tale of the cooter sent in from here last week. Mr. W. J. Wells of this place vouches for the snake story, the details of which are furnished by Mr. Pope Riddlehuber. Mrs. Walter Riddlehuber, who lives about four miles east of town, had occasion to open a drawer which had not been opened for some time. To her surprise and astonishment she found a highland moccasin of tremendous size coiled up in the drawer.

How long the snake had been in there is not known. He was there and had been there some time. It seemed that he could not get out and being attacked by the pangs of hunger he proceeded to devour what was around him in the way of laces and ribbons and had laid away a considerable amount of such things. In fact, Mr. W. J. Wells, who happened along about that time, helped kill the snake and saw that about four yards of lace was removed from his snakeship's mouth.

### The Bureau of Soils Will Investigate State.

Columbia, Special.—The United States bureau of soils will shortly take up the rejuvenation of the famous Pudding Swamp tobacco area in Clarendon county. Commissioner Watson has had the matter up with the federal experts for some time and a letter received states that as soon as the appropriation is available this will be one of the first counties in the United States to receive attention. This will mean much to the planters of that section, said to be one of the richest in the country for the development of tobacco raising. Commissioner Watson will deliver an address at Manning on July 14 in which he will explain the work. He will be accompanied by Prof. Harper, who will talk on tobacco.

### Arrested on Serious Charge.

Anderson, Special.—N. H. Sexton, a well-known white farmer, was committed to jail without bond Tuesday on the charge of an attempt criminal assault upon a white woman who had for several months been his housekeeper. A little more than a year ago Sexton was arrested on a similar charge, the complainant at that time being a negro girl, but the case was thrown out by grand jury.

### Case of J. F. Fuller Refused by Governor.

Columbia, Special.—Gov. Ansel has refused to pardon John Franklin Fuller of this county, convicted and sent up for three years for housebreaking and larceny. Fuller, who is a white boy about 20 years of age, was caught in the bungalow of Capt. John A. Willis a few miles from the city by Dr. E. M. Whaley. He admitted that he had stolen the key to enter the house and both the judge and the solicitor refused to recommend a pardon, although the petition for pardon stated that the boy was weak minded.

### Fat Dividends Make the Spartans Happy.

Spartanburg, Special.—Spartanburg mills, banks and other enterprises paid their shareholders in semi-annual dividends Wednesday something over \$350,000. The exact figures are not at hand but a conservative estimate of the amount is \$365,000. The banking institutions and mills are all paying their usual dividends and some mills have declared extra dividends.

### Opportunities Invite Girls.

"Vacant scholarships of free tuition are offered through the South Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs as follows:  
"South Carolina Kindergarten association—One scholarship for free tuition for two years.  
"Leesville college—Four scholarships for free tuition for four years.  
"Greenville Female college—One scholarship for free tuition for four years.  
"Coker college—One scholarship for free tuition for four years.  
"These will be awarded by competitive examinations held July 10, 1909.  
"Applicants must file their names with the chairman of the department before July 1. Students must be at least 15 years of age and prepared to enter freshman or any higher class and must inform the chairman which college she desires to enter.  
"For further information apply to "Miss Theodosia Dargan, "Chairman Dept. of Education of South Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, Dalzell, S. C."

### Damage Suit Decided.

Columbia, Special.—The Supreme Court last week affirmed the Circuit Court's decision in the case of McCreery vs the Southern Railway Company, in which a judgment was rendered for \$9,500. This was a very unusual case. The contention of the plaintiff's attorneys was that L. I. McCreery, who was a flagman on the Southern, had been over-worked and was killed while asleep on the track with a flag in his hand. The point involved was that the man was alleged to have been on duty overtime and for this reason the road was responsible for his death. The suit was for \$10,000, and \$9,500 was secured.

### Lacey to Stand Trial.

Columbia, Special.—Thomas H. Lacey, alias Thomas Cline, alias Newark Toney, the yegg whom Postoffice Inspector Gregory had sent to the Atlanta prison for five years for robbing the postoffice at McColl, in Marlboro county, will be brought back to Marlboro for trial in the State court on three indictments for burglary and larceny. He will be released from the Atlanta prison Thursday. Deputy Clerk McLaurin, of Marlboro, was here Thursday to secure requisition papers for Lacey. The papers accuse the yegg of robbing E. M. Covington & Co.'s store at McColl and the McColl depot the same night he broke into the McColl postoffice and of robbing the Darlington depot the following night.

### Severe Electrical Storm at Lando.

Chester, Special.—There was a severe electrical storm at Lando Saturday afternoon that for awhile threatened to do great damage. The houses occupied by Messrs. A. L. Nunnery and Thomas Robertson and families were struck and for a time it seemed would be destroyed by fire, but neighbors and occupants by prompt and effective work managed to extinguish the flames. Mr. Nunnery, who was seated on a bed, was struck on the leg by the lightning and his leg from the knee down semi-paralyzed from the shock. He recovered in a few hours, however, and is now as well as ever.

### Pasteur Institute at Home.

Columbia, Special.—The State laboratory for the treatment of rabies and for bacterial examinations opened July 1. At the meeting of the State Medical Association, which was held at Summerville recently, it was decided to open this laboratory, which will mean so much to the medical profession and be of such benefit to the people of South Carolina.

### Guinea Lays Wondrous Eggs.

Aiken, Special.—The Journal and Review has on exhibition two guinea eggs, presented to it by Mr. James Widener, of the Tradway section. One of the eggs has on it a good likeness of a duck in a sitting posture, while the other has an American eagle emblazoned on it. The likenesses are almost perfect, and the eggs are quite a curiosity to all those who have seen them. The eggs were laid by the same guinea. They are normal in every respect, except the pictures, which are in white, while the rest of the egg surface is in the natural brown.

### Ed Sauls Wounded by Watchman Hayes.

Bennettsville, Special.—Ed Sauls, machinist at the Marlboro cotton mills, late Sunday was shot and probably fatally wounded by H. B. Hayes night watchman for the mill. Three or four shots were fired by each man. Hayes has been lodged in jail, pending the result of Saul's injuries. There is conflict of statement as to which man fired the first shot.